108 Attributes of the Five Supreme Beings

Jains respect and worship the qualities of five very worthy personalities and they are known as Pancha Paramesthi, namely, Arihanta, Siddha, Ächärya, Upädhyäy, and Sädhu and Sädhvis (all ascetics). Jains do not worship them by name, but they worship their qualities and virtues known as attributes. There are a total of 108 attributes of the five supreme beings. Both Shvetämbar and Digambar traditions define 108 attributes, but there are some differences. The Jain Mälä or rosary has 108 beads, which signify the 108 attributes of the five supreme beings. The 108 attributes are as follows:

Pancha Paramesthi	**Number of Attributes**
Arihanta or Tirthankar	12
Siddha	8
Ächärya	36
Upädhyäy	25
Sädhu	27
Total	108

Arihanta or Tirthankar

Arihantas have 12 unique characteristics as follows:

- The four main attributes are known as Atishaya.
- The other eight attributes are endowed by heavenly beings at the time of Keval-jnän and are known as Pratihärya.

Four Main Attributes or Four Atishaya

Vachanä Atishaya	A Tirthankar delivers an extraordinary sermon.
Jnän Atishaya	The sermon delivered by a Tirthankar is well understood by all human beings, animals, and heavenly beings in their respective languages.
Pujä Atishaya	A Tirthankar is worshipped by all mundane souls of the whole universe.
Apäyäpgamä Atishaya	No calamities or diseases are present in the vicinity of a Tirthankar.

Note - Some Jain literature indicates that Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Perception, Perfect Conduct, and Infinite Energy (the four Anant Chatushtay) are the four main attributes rather than above mentioned four Atishaya.

Eight Pratihärya - Endowed by Heavenly gods

Simhäsan	A divine seat from where Arihanta delivers his sermon.
Bhämandal	A halo behind Arihanta's head is always present.
Chämar	Heavenly beings wave diamond studded fans (Chämar) to honor Arihanta's greatness.
Chhatra Traya	A three tier divine umbrella over the head of a Arihanta is always present, which suggests that the Tirthankar is the king of the entire universe that consists of three regions – Heaven, Hell, and Earth.
Ashok Vruksha	The Ashok tree under which Arihanta sits to deliver sermons.
Pushpa Vristi	A continuous shower of fragrant flowers.
Deva Dundubhi	A divine announcement declaring Arihanta's

	sermons.
Divya Dhvani	Celestial music accompanying Arihanta's sermon.

Some Jain literature expands the above 12 attributes to 34 attributes of Tirthankars also known as 34 Atishaya. Some differences exist between the Shvetämbar and Digambar traditions in defining these Atishayas.

34 Atishaya of a Tirthankar - Shvetämbar Tradition:

4 Attributes Present at Birth:

- Divine and healthy body, which is fragrant and without perspiration
- Fragrant breath
- Milky white, odorless blood and flesh
- Invisible food intake (diet) and excreta

11 Attributes attained at Omniscience or Keval-Jnäna:

- Eight attributes indicating absence of disease, enmity, calamity, plague, flooding, draught, famine, and political unrest up to a distance of 125 Yojan (ancient degree of measurement 1 Yogan = approximately 4 miles).
- The Tirthankar's sermon, though delivered in Ardha-Mägadhi language, is understood well by all, including animals, and is heard clearly up to 1 Yojan away.
- Aura or Halo (Bhämandal) – A circle of light around Tirthankar's head.
- A total of 10,000,000 x 10,000,000 (=100,000 billion) human beings, heavenly beings, and animals can be accommodated within a space of 1 Yojan Square when a Tirthankar delivers sermons.

19 Attributes Created by Heavenly Gods:

- Wheel of dharma (Dharma-chakra) that moves with Tirthankar
- Chämar
- A throne
- Three layered umbrella over the head of Tirthankar
- A flag (Dharma-Dhajä)
- Nine golden lotus flowers to walk upon
- A gold, silver, and jewel-laden fort (Samavasaran) for delivering sermons
- Visibility of Tirthankar's face from all directions while delivering sermons
- Ashok tree
- Thorns face downwards while Arihant is walking
- Trees bow down to Tirthankar
- Music from divine drums at the time of sermons
- Cool soothing breeze
- Circumambulation of birds
- Sprinkles of fragrant water
- Shower of fragrant flowers
- Hair and nails do not grow following renunciation
- Ten million heavenly beings always accompany Tirthankar
- The seasons are always favorable

34 attributes of Tirthankar - Digambar Tradition

10 attributes present at birth:

- Most beautiful body
- Body full of fragrance
- Body devoid of perspiration
- Body devoid of excretion
- Peaceful and soothing voice
- Unmatched physical strength
- Milk-like blood
- 1008 desirable birthmarks and features
- Proportionally built body
- Solid physique

10 attributes acquired upon attaining omniscience:

- Prosperity exists all around in the presence of Arihanta
- Walking without touching the ground
- Visibility of Arihanta's face from all four directions
- Total compassion
- Life devoid of obstacles
- No food required to sustain life
- Perfect knowledge
- No growth of hair and nails
- No blinking of eyes
- No formation of a shadow of body

14 Attributes Created by the Heavenly Gods:

- Facilitating a universal language
- Enabling all beings to get along with each other
- Clean air all around
- Clear skies
- Fruits, crops, and flowers flourish year-round irrespective of season
- Miles and miles of neat and clean grounds all-around
- Lotuses made from gold under Tirthankar's feet
- Sounds of reverential praises in the skies around Tirthankar
- Blowing of slow and fragrant breeze
- Fragrant rain
- Removal of all potential obstacles from the land
- Contentment all around
- Movement of the Dharma-chakra (symbolic wheel of religion) in Tirthankar's Samavasaran
- Presence of eight embellishments; Chhatra, Chämar, Dhajä (flag), bell, Kalash (sacred vessel), fan, swastika, and mirror around the Tirthankar

Siddha

Siddhas are liberated souls. They are no longer among us because they have completely ended the cycle of birth and death. They have destroyed all their Karma, and they do not acquire any new karma. This state of true freedom is called liberation. By destroying all 8 types of Karmas, Siddhas manifest 8 unique attributes as follows:

Eight Attributes of Siddhas

Attributes	Meaning	Name of Karma
4 Attributes by destroying Four Ghäti Karma		
Anant-jnän	Infinite knowledge	Jnänävaraniya Karma
Anant-darshan	Infinite perception	Darshanävaraniya Karma
Anant-chäritra	Perfect conduct	Mohaniya Karma
Anant-virya	Infinite energy	Antaräya Karma
4 Attributes by destroying Four Aghäti Karma		
Avyäbädha-sukha	Eternal happiness	Vedaniya Karma
Akshaya-Sthiti	Immortality	Äyushya Karma
Arupitva	Formlessness	Näma Karma
Aguru-Laghutva	Equality among all Siddhas	Gotra Karma

Ächärya

The teachings of Lord Mahävir are carried on by the Ächäryas. They are the spiritual leaders and the heads of the congregation of monks, nuns and lay people. They possess the following 36 qualities:

Thirty Six Attributes of Ächäryas - Shvetämbar Tradition

18 Attributes with regards to elimination of 18 Impurities

- 5 Attributes of self-control over the pleasures of the 5 senses
  - Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight, and Hearing
- 9 Attributes to follow 9 restrictions for observance of celibacy
  - Not to live where lay people (Shrävaks and Shrävikäs) live
  - Not to sit alone with a person of the opposite gender
  - Not to talk in private with a person of the opposite gender
  - Not to observe the body of the opposite gender
  - To only eat bland but pure food (not dressed with spices)
  - To avoid food that produces impurity of the mind
  - Not to adorn the body
  - Not to remember past sensual pleasures
  - Not to listen to the private conversations of others
- 4 Attributes to avoid the 4 types of passions
  - Anger, Ego, Deceit and Greed

18 Attributes with regards to 18 Qualities to Acquire

- 5 Attributes pertaining to follow the Five Great vows
  - Nonviolence, Truthfulness, Non-stealing, Celibacy, Non-possessiveness / Non-possession
- 5 Attributes related to observe the five codes of conduct regarding
  - Knowledge, Faith, Conduct, Penance, Vigor

- 5 Attributes related to observing carefulness
    - Walking, talking, obtaining alms, putting clothes and other things and disposing bodily waste properly
- 3 Attributes to restrain the three medium of activity
    - Regarding activities of mind, speech and body

Thirty Six Attributes of Ächäryas - Digambar Tradition

Digambar tradition, however, mentions thirty-six attributes of Ächäryas as follows:

- 6 External Austerities
    - Anashan (Not eating for a set period of time)
    - Unodari (Eating less than needed)
    - Vritti-sankshepa (Eating within the limits of predetermined restrictions)
        - Material - Eat only a certain number of items
        - Area - Eat only within limits of a certain area
        - Time - Eat only once at a certain time
        - Mode - Eat food only obtained or made by certain means
    - Rasa Tyäg (Eating non-tasty food (reflection of temptation – example; Äyambil Tapa)
    - Käya-klesha (Penance, tolerating physical pain voluntarily)
    - Sanlinatä (Staying in a forlorn place and occupying minimum space)
- 6 Internal austerities
    - Präyashchitta (Repentance or remorse)
    - Vinay (Humility, Respect for others)
    - Veyävachcham (Selfless service to monks, nuns and needy)
    - Swädhyäy (Study of religious scriptures)
    - Dhyäna (Meditation)
    - Käyotsarga (Giving up physical activities and staying absorbed in the soul)
- 10 Religious Virtues
    - Kshamä (Forgiveness)
    - Märdava (Humility)
    - Ärjava (Straightforwardness)
    - Shaucha (Contentment - absence of greed)
    - Satya (Truth)
    - Sanyam (Self-control)
    - Tapa (Austerities)
    - Tyäg (Renunciation)
    - Äkinchan (Non-possessiveness)
    - Brahmacharya (Celibacy)
- 5 Ächär (Codes of Conduct)
    - Darshanächär (Codes of Acquiring Right Perception)
    - Jnänächär (Codes of Acquiring Right Knowledge)
    - Chäriträchär (Codes of Acquiring Right Conduct)
    - Tapächär (Codes of Austerities)
    - Viryächär (Codes of Exercising Energy or Vigor)
- 6 Ävashyaks (Essential Duties)
    - Devapujä (Prayer to Tirthankars)

Gurupästi (Devotion and service to Gurus)
Swädhyäy (Studying of Scriptures)
Sanyam (Self restraints)
Tapa (Penance)
Däna (Imparting Knowledge and Protection of Life)

- 3 Guptis (Control)
  Mano Gupti (Control over mind)
  Vachan Gupti (Control over speech)
  Käya Gupti (Control over body)

Upädhyäy

This title is given to those Sädhus who have acquired complete knowledge of the Jain scriptures (Ägams) and philosophy. They teach Jain scriptures to other ascetics and lay people. Upädhyäys possess 25 attributes. These 25 attributes are the symbolic representation of the 25 Jain scriptures they study. These scriptures are as follows:

Twenty Five Attributes – Shvetämbar Tradition

- 11 canonical texts (Anga Ägam) compiled by the Ganadharas, who were the immediate/first disciples of Tirthankar
- 12 canonical texts (Upängas) compiled by Shruta Kevalis
- 1 scripture of proper conduct
- 1 scripture of proper practice

Twenty Five Attributes – Digambar Tradition

- 11 Canonical texts (Anga Ägam) compiled by the Ganadharas (same for all Jain sects)
- 14 Purva Ägam (Oldest Jain scriptures) compiled by the Ganadharas (same for all Jain sects)

Sädhu and Sädhvi

Jain literature defines 27 attributes of ascetics. Both Digambar and Shvetämbar traditions have some differences in defining these attributes. Also, the Shvetämbar literature defines two groups of 27 attributes.

When lay people (Shrävaks and Shrävikäs) wish to detach from the worldly aspects of life and gain a desire for spiritual upliftment, they renounce their worldly lives and become Sädhus (monks) or Sädhvis (nuns). They must follow the five great vows known as five Mahävratas

The great vows of monks and nuns imply not doing, not asking someone to do, and not appreciating someone's act of breaching of these vows by mind, body or speech.

5 Mahävratas (Great Vows)

Ahimsa	Nonviolence	Not to commit any type of violence.
Satya	Truth	Not to indulge in any type of lie or falsehood
Asteya	Non-stealing	Not to take anything not given voluntarily.
Brahmacharya	Celibacy	Not to indulge in any sensual pleasures
Aparigraha	Non-possessiveness	Not to acquire more than what is needed to maintain day-to-day life

27 Attributes of Ascetics

Shvetämbar Tradition (group 1)

- 5 Great vows to follow
- 5 senses to control – To control the pleasures of five senses; touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing
- 3 activities to control: mind, speech, and body (Three Guptis)
- 6 types of souls to protect

  Protection of five one-sensed lives (water, fire, earth, air and plant known as Sthävar souls) and one group of mobile living beings (two-sensed to five-sensed living beings grouped together known as Trasa souls)
- Observe restraints
- Not to eat before sunrise or after sunset
- Practice forgiveness
- Avoid greed
- Endurance of hardship
- Endurance of suffering
- Introspection
- Keep a pure heart

Shvetämbar Tradition (group 2)

- 5 Great Vows (Mahä-vrata) to follow
- 5 senses to control – To control the pleasures of five senses; touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing
- 3 activies to control: mind, speech and body (three Guptis)
- 4 Kashäyas to avoid, which are the four passions: Anger, Ego, Deceit, Greed
- 3 attributes related to following the proper conviction or faith, knowledge, and conduct (Darshan, Jnän, and Chäritra)
- 2 types of dhyäna to Practice - which are Dharma dhyäna and Shukla dhyäna.
- 5 Activities and Regulations to Practice (5 Karan)
- Practice of yoga
- Practice total forgiveness
- Disinterest in worldly affairs and interest only in removal of Mithyätva and Kashäya (Interest in liberation - Samvega)
- Enduring hardships and suffering with equanimity known as conquering of Parishaha
- Endurance and fearlessness towards death and associated pains, and also acceptance of voluntary death known as Sanlekhanä

Twenty Seven Attributes of Ascetics

Digambar Tradition

Attributes of the Digambar monks (Sädhus) vary somewhat, with one significant requirement that male monks are sky-clad, or do not wear any clothing.

- 5 Great Vows Mahä-vrata
- 5 Samiti

  Iryä Samiti (carefulness while walking)

  Bhäshä Samiti (carefulness in talking)

  Eshanä Samiti (carefulness while receiving alms)

  Ädäna Nikshepanä Samiti (carefulness while handling clothes or any object)

  Pärishthä-pänikä Samiti (carefulness while disposing of bodily waste)
- 5 senses to control – To control the pleasures of five senses; touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing
- 6 Ävashyaks (Essential Duties - same as in Digambar Ächäryas)

Devapujä (Prayer to Tirthankars)
Gurupästi (Devotion and service to Gurus)
Swädhyäy (Study of Scriptures)
Sanyam (Self restraint)
Tapa (Penance)
Däna (Imparting Knowledge and Protection of Life)

- 6 Other Attributes
  Kesha-lochan (Plucking of own hair)
  Asnäna (No bathing)
  Bhumi Shayan (Sleeping on the floor)
  Adanta-dhovan (No brushing of teeth)
  Uttisthan-ähär Sevan (Eating food in standing posture)
  Ekabhukti (Eating one meal a day only)

Some schools maintain monks (not nuns) wearing no clothes, as an attribute in this section. According to them monks have twenty-eight attributes instead of twenty-seven.

The Jain ascetics possess the above attributes. Their activities are directed towards the upliftment of their souls to the state of liberation.

Pravin K Shah
Jaina Education Committee
jainaedu@gmail.com
www.jainelibrary.org
919-859-4994